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ABSTRACT

SOCRATES is the European Community's new education program for the member states of the European Union (EU) (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom) and the European Economic Area (EU plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). Its aims are to contribute to the development of quality education and training and to create of an open European area for cooperation in education. Its specific objectives, which include encouraging open and distance education, are addressed through its three parts: (1) Chapter I--ERASMUS, the higher education component; (2) Chapter II--COMENIUS, the school education section; and (3) Chapter III--the Horizontal Measures initiatives. The ERASMUS component promotes the European dimension in universities through transnational cooperation and encourages student mobility among the member states. The COMENIUS component promotes partnership between schools, focuses on the education of migrant and transient students, and works for professional staff development. Horizontal measures promote a variety of transnational efforts to promote language skills in the European Community, open and distance learning, and the exchange of information and experience. (SLD)

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EPIC Europe EUROFOCUS 6

ED 385 219

SOCRATES

Aim

SOCRATES is the European Community's new education programme for the Member States of the European Union (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom) and the European Economic Area (EU plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). Its aim, in line with Article 126 of the Treaty of Maastricht, is to

> contribute to the development of quality education and training and the creation of an open European area for co-operation in education.

Through the programme, the European Commission will support and supplement the actions of Member States while respecting their individual responsibility for the content of teaching, the organisation of their education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity. The programme has nine specific objectives:

i) to develop a European dimension in education at all levels;
ii) to promote knowledge of the languages of the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA);
iii) to promote co-operation between institutions at all levels of education;
iv) to encourage teacher mobility;
v) to encourage higher education student mobility;
vi) to encourage contacts among school pupils in the EU and the EEA;
vii) to encourage the academic recognition of periods of study, diplomas and other qualifications;
viii) to encourage open and distance education;
ix) to foster the exchange of information and experience.

Structure

The SOCRATES programme is divided into three parts:

i) Chapter I - Higher Education (ERASMUS) (at least 55 per cent of the budget)
ii) Chapter II - School Education (COMENIUS) (at least 10 per cent of the budget)
iii) Chapter III - Horizontal Measures (at least 25 per cent of the budget)

The European Union is advised by the SOCRATES Committee, comprising two members from each Member State. The Committee meets twice yearly and is chaired by the Commission. Two sub-committees deal with higher education and school education respectively. Working groups will be established as required. A joint working group for language learning with the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme is envisaged.

At national level, each Member State appoints its own national agencies to manage specific elements of the Programme.

Further information:
European Union Policy Team, Department for Education

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Chapter I - Higher Education (ERASMUS)

All existing activities under the inter-university co-operation programmes (ICPs), ERASMUS and LINGUA (Action II) have been incorporated into this Chapter.

Action 1 Promoting the European dimension in universities through transnational co-operation, especially the development of ICPs

Activities financed under ICPs

i) study periods abroad;

ii) promotion of the European credit transfer system;

iii) joint development of curricula;

iv) mobility of teaching staff; and

v) short intensive courses for students from several Member States.

Activities outside ICPs include study visits for:

i) teaching staff;

ii) administrative staff; and

iii) in certain cases only, students.

Other eligible activities

i) incorporation of curriculum material which promotes the European dimension (including distance education);

ii) the learning of EU and EEA languages as an integral part of studies;

iii) joint ventures among groups of universities co-operating with community groups or partners from industry.

Action 2 Encouraging student mobility and financing ERASMUS grants

Grants are available for students studying in another Member State for a period of between three months (or one term) and one academic year. Priority will be given to students who follow courses in activities supported under the terms of Action 1.

Existing ERASMUS procedures will apply in 1995.

Further information and how to apply:

Action 1	European Commission
Action 2	UK ERASMUS Student Grants Council

Chapter II - School Education (COMENIUS)

Action 1 Partnerships between schools

Partnerships between groups of at least three schools from three Member States, known as multilateral schools partnerships (MSPs), are eligible to apply for funding. The partnerships must be built around a European Education Project (EEP) which aims to develop one or more subjects of European interest through educational activities, such as:

i) pupil participation in cross-curricular projects;
ii) increasing pupil awareness of the languages and cultures of the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA);
iii) innovatory use of information technology; and
iv) exchange of materials and experience of innovatory teaching methods.

These activities must be integrated into the normal work of the school.

In 1995-6, this action envisages: 500 partnerships involving some 2000 schools, 800 teacher exchanges (TEX), 1000 preparatory visits and 500 study visits for head teachers.

Action 2 Education of the children of migrant workers, occupational travellers, travellers and gypsies, intercultural education

This supports projects which promote the participation in schooling and the improved quality of education for the children in the above groups. It also supports measures aimed at promoting intercultural education for all school children. This Action is not currently open to unsolicited applications.

Action 3 Updating the skills of educational staff

Institutions and organisations responsible for updating and improving the skills of educational staff may apply for support for transnational projects which promote:

i) the exchange of information and experience concerned with adding a European dimension to the continuing professional development of teachers;
ii) raising levels of school achievement and participation in school activities of pupils with specific educational needs and capacities;
iii) the development of partnerships relating to this Action.

From 1996-97, funds will also be provided to allow staff to attend seminars or participate in activities organised jointly by the institutions or organisations concerned.

Further information and how to apply:

Action 1	Central Bureau, International Dimension Programmes
Action 2	Department for Education, School Pupils and Parents Branch
Action 3	Central Bureau, Professional Development Programmes

Chapter III - HORIZONTAL MEASURES

A horizontal measure is one which supplements the Actions of Chapters I and II. The horizontal measures in this Chapter apply to all levels of education.

Action 1 Promotion of language skills in the Community (LINGUA)

Actions 1A, 1B, IV and VB of the former LINGUA programme are included in this SOCRATES Action. Existing procedures have been extended, with some minor modifications, to avoid interruptions to the 1995 programme.

This Action supports transnational projects involving the following activities, with priority given to the least widely used and least taught languages

- Action A development of European Co-operation Programmes (ECPs) by institutions responsible for the initial or continuing training of language teachers, to update, reinforce and expand language and teaching skills. From 1996-97 initial teacher training will also be included;
- Action B immersion courses abroad for language teachers;
- Action C assistantships abroad for future language teachers;
- Action D development and exchange of curricula, production of new teaching material and improvement of methods and tools for the recognition of linguistic experience;
- Action E joint educational projects for pupils.

Action 2 Promotion of open and distance learning (ODL)

This Action supports transnational projects which aim to:

i) facilitate co-operation between organisations and institutions based on the exchange of information and experience;

ii) enhance the skills of teachers, trainers and managers in the techniques of open and distance learning;

iii) improve the quality and user-friendliness of distance education products; and

iv) encourage the recognition of qualifications obtained through open and distance learning.

Action 3 Promotion of exchange of information and experience

This Action has strands related to the exchange of information and experience by the European Commission and existing networks:

i) the European Commission will encourage comparative studies and analyses, the organisation of conferences and the exchange of experts, on issues of common interest to Member States. Priority will be given to the problems of children leaving the educational system without adequate preparation and the methods for evaluating teaching quality;

ii) the EURYDICE network provides information, primarily for senior policy makers, on educational systems and policy, reforms and innovation and the results of research in education. EURYDICE will also be involved in activities relating to point (i) above;

iii) the ARION programme organises study visits on set themes, by education policy makers and senior educationists likely to have a multiplier effect, from different Member States;

iv) the NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre) network which provides information on academic qualifications will continue to be supported along existing lines.

v-a) promotion of the European dimension in adult education through Adult Education Projects (AEPs). An AEP must involve institutions from at least three Member States offering general, social and cultural education to adults;

v-b) complementary measures including awareness raising and promotional activities.

Further information and how to apply:

Action 1	Central Bureau, UK LINGUA Unit
Action 2	Department for Education, European Union Policy Team
Action 3	EURYDICE
	Central Bureau, ARION
	NARIC, British Council
	DFE, European Union Policy Team (Adult education)

ACRONYMS

AEP	Adult Education Project - transnational project involving institutions from three Member States offering general, social and cultural education for adults.
ARION	EU programme of multilateral study visits for education policy makers, co-ordinators of European projects and senior educationists likely to have a multiplier effect.
CB	The Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges.
COMENIUS	EU programme to support activities involving school education.
EC	European Community; sometimes European Commission
ECPs	European Co-operation Programmes for the joint design and creation of innovatory training schemes and teaching materials.
EEA	European Economic Area (i.e. the 15 EU Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway).
EEP	European Education Project - aims to develop one or more subjects of European interest through a set of educational activities and measures integrated into the regular activities of the schools.
ERASMUS	EU programme in the field of higher education.
EU	European Union. Currently 15 members: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom
EURYDICE	EU/EEA education policy information network
ICP	Inter-university Cooperation Project.
LEONARDO DA VINCI	EU programme in the field of vocational training.
LINGUA	EU programme to promote knowledge of the languages used in the EU and the EEA.
LWULT	Least widely used and least taught languages of the European Union such as Letzeburgesch, Portuguese and Greek.
MSP	Multilateral Schools Partnerships - partnerships between groups of at least three schools from at least three Member States.
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre.
ODL	Open and Distance Learning.
SOCRATES	EU umbrella programme in the field of education.
TEX	EU teacher exchange scheme.

ADDRESSES

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June 1995

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